

**INFORMATION REPORT**

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25X1A9a

COUNTRY Venezuela

25X1A2g

DATE DISTR. 5 Jan 1949

**SUBJECT** Political Situation in Maracibo (V) Region

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DATE OF INFO.

**SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.**

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1. On 9 December 1948 a Lt. de Pablo, who is in charge of the National Guard at Lagunillas, conferred with Captain Carlos Gomez Calcano, Commander of the National Guard for the whole eastern Maracaibo Lake region, on maintaining extra troops in Lagunilla. The discussion was prompted by rumors indicating the possibility of a general strike in the oil fields on or about 16 December 1948.
2. According to oil company officials, the normal National Guard complement at Lagunillas consists of approximately forty men. This number was increased by seventy-five sailors and reservists at the time of the recent military coup. The normal complement in the Cabimas area roughly totals about eighty men, with an increment of sixty since the revolt. [REDACTED] Comment. It will be noted that the total of 115 men under arms in the Lagunillas area and 140 men in the Cabimas area vary greatly from the estimate of 400-600 permanent National Guardsmen in the east shore area previously reported by Major Casanova, Commander of the Zulia Military Zone. Cf. [REDACTED]
3. It has not been possible to determine the authenticity of the report of a general strike, since most of the Accion Democratica (AD) leaders have disappeared and Communist leaders are operating with extreme caution. It is not believed that any general strike instructions have been issued. The rumor may be based on the fact that on 15 December oil company employees were to receive a bonus equal to approximately two months' salary. It was feared that with this amount of money the workers would be in a financial position to sustain a protracted strike against the oil companies, which would have repercussions on the Government.
4. There are indications of certain underground political activities in and around the Lagunillas area. Mimeographed handbills have been distributed quoting an alleged message from ex-President Romulo Gallegos calling on all patriotic Venezuelans to overthrow the de facto government and military regime. Although labor agitation and political activity are at a minimum in the east Lake area, it is the consensus of oil company officials that the trouble is not at an end. There has also been an unusually large number of resignations among the oil company workers, some of whom "wish to get out of the area before further trouble breaks out". There also appears to exist a certain

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"vacuum" between labor and management, which the latter feels may be an indication of further disorder. ~~Comment.~~ It is not believed that the above facts are alarming. The military are well equipped to handle almost any situation, and have done an admirable job to date in the protection of oil interests. The workers are comparatively unarmed. Their only effective weapon will be to organize and sustain a protracted general strike. This does not appear imminent under present government restrictions.)

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